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U. S. CONGRESS.—In the Senate yesterday, the bill to define the rank, pay and emoluments of certain officers of the army was passed. A resolution was adopted requesting the President to communicate to the Senate, the rules and regulations under which prisoners of war are now being exchanged. The bill making appropriations for the West Point Academy, elicited a long debate, which branched off into party politics, and in the course of which, Mr. Davis characterized General Butler as the meanest and most contemptible Democrat that ever walked the face of the earth—one too, who, in the opinion of Mr. Davis, would sell himself for a sufficient consideration, every day in the week. The Diplomatic and Consular appropriation bill was taken up and debated until the hour of adjournment.

In the House of Representatives the military committee were instructed to inquire into the expediency of increasing the cavalry force by the immediate raising of fifty thousand volunteers. A bill was reported to establish a national currency, and providing for its redemption. The report of the conference committee on the deficiency bill was concurred in, and a resolution adopted instructing the naval committee to inquire into the expediency of establishing a naval depot near New Castle, Del. The gold bill, as amended by the Senate, authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to sell surplus gold in the Treasury, was then taken up and discussed until the hour of adjournment.

There is nothing of special importance from East Tennessee, beyond the fact that Longstreet still holds his strong position at Bull's Gap, and that his cavalry are continually hovering on the flanks of the Federal troops around Knoxville. There appears to be great apprehensions at Knoxville, of a raid on the part of Morgan for the purpose of breaking up railway communication between Knoxville and Chattanooga. The Knoxville correspondent of the New York Tribune states that the Federal troops in that region have acted so long on the defensive, yielding every position and falling back behind their breastworks, that the people have lost all confidence in their ability to do anything beyond holding Knoxville.

Another fraud has turned up in the U. S. Treasury Department. A clerk has been detected—and indeed has confessed the crime—in getting hold of old consular vouchers, making out accounts upon them, stating balances, getting hold of the drafts, endorsing said drafts and realizing.

On Saturday afternoon President Lincoln entertained at the Executive Mansion, Gen. Meade, Wool, Hunter, Doubleday, Sickles, Crittenden and McCook.

The Washington Constitutional Union of yesterday afternoon says:—"We learn, from an authentic source, that Lieut. Gen. Grant will return to this city in a very short time, for the express purpose of reorganizing the Army of the Potomac, and that General W. F. Smith will be the commander of the Army of the Potomac *de facto*, while Gen. Grant will be the commander *de jure*. Gen. Grant will do the planning, and Gen. Smith will do the fighting. Everything in detail will be under the immediate direction and supervision of Gen. Grant, and that an early and vigorous spring campaign will open as soon as the rainy season is over, and Gen. Grant will superintend the first movement on to Richmond.—There is no doubt about this being the programme laid down, and that Gen. Meade will shortly retire on account of his ill health."

Maj. White, one of the elected State Senators from Pennsylvania, taken prisoner by the Confederates has not been exchanged. It was erroneously stated a few days ago that he had been. It was another Maj. White that has been exchanged.

The Washington Star says that there is no truth in the report of the stoppage of exchanges; and adds "that the U. S. government, as we are further assured, has no intention whatever of interfering with the business of regulating the exchanges entrusted to Gen. Butler."

Several cases of street robbery are reported in Washington. Persons passing along the streets at night have been knocked down, and their money stolen.

The latest news from Mexico, is from French sources, and speaks of the continued success of the Imperialists and French troops. The Juarez government seems now to be reduced to four or five states, and the national cause nearly extinct.

A letter from Jacksonville, Florida, on the 11th ult., states that Colonel Henry's Federal cavalry were attacked on that day, in their second position, and driven in by the Confederates with the loss of a number wounded. It was expected that an attack would be made upon Jacksonville the following day. The correspondent of the New York Times states that the Federal loss in the battle of Olustee turns out much greater than it was first reported to have been. He puts the number of wounded alone at eight hundred. The Confederates are still in considerable force at Baldwin, and scouts report that strenuous efforts are in progress to deplete the State of its stock of cattle, which is being driven off as fast as possible.—The report that General Vodges had superseded General Seymour in the command of the Florida forces is contradicted.

The Richmond Enquirer says that the "Legislature has ordered an address to be prepared on the subject of the recent raid by Kilpatrick, and a collection of the circumstances to be made for record."

In the U. S. Senate, yesterday Mr. Davis offered the following:

Whereas in the history of the attempt to rescue Anthony Burns, a fugitive from Virginia, it is reported that T. W. Higginson, now a Colonel of the 54th Massachusetts colored regiment, led the assault made by a body of men upon the court house, where the said fugitive Burns was held in custody, with the intent of forcibly releasing from said custody; and whereas, a citizen of the United States then having custody of the said prisoner, was killed and murdered by the said assault; therefore.

Resolved, That the President of the Senate appoint three members of the Senate to inquire and report whether the said Higginson had any connection with the said assault, and that said committee shall have power to send for persons and papers.

Objected to by Mr. Sumner, and laid over and ordered to be printed.

The Washington Star states that "On Friday evening last a detachment of one hundred men from Gen. Custer's Cavalry command started on a scout towards Blair mountain in Madison county, Va. Sometime during Friday night they made a dash into a guerrilla camp on the stream known as Conway river, just west of the above named mountain, and captured twenty. They also "captured ten negroes" and brought them in.

It is officially announced that the finding of the court of inquiry in the case of General Don Carlos Buell will soon be published, and it is added, furthermore, that it acquits him of all blame in the conduct of his various campaigns. The court of inquiry was in session one hundred and sixty days, and adjourned in May, 1863.

Private advices report that the privateer Rappahannock had left France, armed with six guns and manned with a picked crew.

The U. S. Navy Department has intelligence of the capture on the 6th instant, off Wilmington, of the blockade runner Mary Ann, a new English steamer, especially built for the trade and very fast. Also of the capture of the British sloop Two Brothers, bound from Nassau to Florida, and of the capture of cotton on the Sunawoo river.

The statement that it is in contemplation to erect workshops on St. Inigoes' Creek, in St. Mary's county, Md., for the repair of the boats of the flotilla, is not correct. The coal depot which has been heretofore at Piney Point, will be removed to that place as soon as the wharf there is completed.

Gen. Peck has issued an order prohibiting the sending of information to any of the Northern Press by any person in North Carolina other than authorized correspondents.

The Southern papers are discussing variously, pro and con, the recent appointment of Gen. Bragg, to his present position.

The Richmond Whig calls upon "every officer and soldier to repair to his post."

The Richmond Enquirer says there is a decline of prices and that "hoarders and holders for famine prices may get their fingers burned."